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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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It takes every shape.
It needs you. It roads.
It possums. It kneels down.
Who knows the effect of one's own smile?

A smile is movement, a smile is time
timed,
 underlined.
A smile is commentary and disclosure.

A photo of a smile is a footnote to no text,
makes no sense, a bunch of numbers,
an invitation sent to your house
but written in an unknown alphabet.
Anything else is a schooner wrecked on the shore.

1 June 2007

HOUSEHOLDER

O my god I am responsible
for all these trees, this grass
weed bare earth assemblage
of lawn, this air, this light,
o my god all this cries out
daddy daddy to me
then it runs away and hides.

What kind of person has a maple for a son,
and linden daughters, a bevy of them
and each one needs a dowry,
unremitting love! Piano lessons!
Orthodontic dentists for every branch.
And every night I have to sneak around
reading each one's diary before I sleep.

Or else I have to dream their dreams
and wake half-crazed with risky reasoning,
trees don't let anybody sleep, we all know that,
a forest never stops. And I have to
be in charge of this perpetual machine!

You try it. Write down in English
what your ash tree tells you,
never mind the squirrel. Transcribe
the adolescent raptures of the rose.

Then tell me life is easy. Christ,
it makes more noise than music
and it never rests. Only love
could ever make sense of this—
Saint Joseph, pray for me.

1 June 2007

THE HARP

There is a harp set up in the woods.
Other harps make soft caressive frenchy noises.
Not this one. This is fierce
and strikes hard brands of silence.

Silences. I see it in the undergrowth,
ruddy at sunset, and no one's hands.
No one's hands.

1 June 2007

FOUND PEN

The found
Is the foundation
Of everything.

Foundation stone.
Eben. Well,
It was a got day in New Russia,
I gad an idea
About the beginning
Of the bottom,
It walked me to the
Fingerpost.

I saw a word
The word was
S w o r d

I asked the sign
Who brings it to me?

Bray for it and it will come:
Goalie Ghost
You art in the Given.
You make everywhom
Gold in place.

My pen speaks with accent
Like man catches cold.
Gold. Who knows
Who wrote with whom before?

1 June 2007, Kingston

SCANDALOUS

Seagulls everywhere.
In the restaurant
I saw a poor thin man
With a new stump
On his old arm,
Bandages barely
Bigger than his bone.

1 VI 07, Kingston

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What to say to Death:
But I haven't even begun yet!
Sometimes he listens.

2 VI 07

= = = = =

It said me so many
and so few said I.

I was a grammar
dull beneath its argument.

Its words were arias
I could hear far away

drifting out of the sealed
auditorium of the heart

I had no ticket for,
no ticket but I heard

and said the little bit I could.

2 June 2007

= = = = =

Too nervous to go on.
The serene morning,
rooster over there, hourglass
shattering all over the sky.
Smell of roses. And what
if all this were waiting for me?

2 June 2007

SONG

You won't remember this,
that is the highest bliss.
It goes all through you
and becomes what you become
so there is nothing to remember.

2 June 2007

HIGHWAY

A husband and a wife decide to drive to the sun. They drive sixteen hours a day, taking turns at the wheel. They give themselves only eight hours for eating and sleeping and refueling – they are eager to get there. The road is pretty good, straight as can be, and they do a steady eighty miles an hour, a decent compromise between eager speed and prudent safety. One day while eating some chicken at a stop for lunch, they do some math and figure out that at their present rate of travel, it will take them give or take a year, two hundred years to get to the sun. She wonders if that won't be too late. Too late for what, he wants to know. Children and things, she thinks. He agrees. But how can they speed up? If they increase their speed to 100 mph. If they drive constantly, one sleeping while the other drives, and stopping only one hour a day to refresh themselves and dine, they can cut the trip almost by half; now it would take them only 110 years or so to reach the sun. That makes sense. That probably gives them time enough to settle into a nice quarter, find meaningful work, and have some children when they arrive.

And so it went for many a long year. Then one evening, during their one hour at rest alongside a pleasant stretch of sky, the husband out of nowhere said But I miss you, I miss being with you, as it is, you're most often asleep while I'm driving, and then I'm asleep when you are driving. Sometimes I just pretend to sleep so I can be with you a little. And then I really do fall asleep. Often I dream I'm with you, in the old days, when we drove only two-thirds of the time, and that's such a nice dream, you and me, talking and laughing or being quiet, and the road rolling away from us behind. Do you have dreams like that?

But the wife didn't have much in the way of dreams. Sometimes (she said) I dream the road is running on ahead of us, forever and ever, but now it's another kind of road, with a yellow line running up the middle. Sometimes there's even another car coming towards us! But I always wake up before I see what kind of car it is, or who is in it.

2 June 2007

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Remedy of everything
a heart embarrassed in a bakery
caught between and betwixt
love of pastry and love of the baker

this could be difficult, be a long run
straight into the sun on a rainy day
you eat the glisten on pink frosting
you listen to molecules, honey,

that's all you ever hear, any of us,
I thought it was waves, well
what kind of waves? I thought
it was almost and sugar and soft cheese

I thought it was raisins
and she could stay awake all night
talking to me like no one else ever
to remind me (I need that)

I am who I think I am
when at such an hour
I could be anyone at all
and never know,

like looking out at dawn and seeing
a dog or is it a wolf
and there aren't any wolves anymore
except here and there, rare,

from the mountains they come down
from where love looks
up from all his labors
smiles and licks the spoon.

3 June 2007

FIDUCIARY MOMENT

Suddenly I am responsible
for everything. Everything.
Then it passes. Never

will I forget how this feels.

3 June 2007

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Roaring of the near me,
a pen to write the ocean with
in everybody's notebook not just mine
just look at it
the page fills up itself
the grammar also
breaks on the sea rocks
sometimes even sun can break a word.

As if we were components of
a complex sentence it is
our duty, our lives, to parse.
And wait forever
with that impatience called Love
for what we children were taught
to think was the Main Verb.

4 June 2007

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But green
hermeneutics I mean
under this mountain
they call Lebanon

make every
interpretation rife
with multiple
seminals, prong

the fertile field of our
knowing. Knowing
should always lead
to more knowing,

knowing and knowing
and nothing known
You never get to the top
but you never come down.

4 June 2007
Chatham

BALL

A ball in a pool
afloat. Red and yellow
segmented. A ball.
The pool otherwise

untenanted.
Men have enemies and friends,
the ball has itself, its long
patient balancing act

of inside versus outside,
the Wall. A ball is a wall
around everything else.
Keeping out. In.

4 June 2007
Chatham

CHACONNE

After the exultation of solo flight and the sound of our hearing comes to the top of heaven and even, sometimes, cracks a certain delicate membrane no theology discusses beyond which there is no God but it is holier than holy all the same, there comes a point in the performance when the music stops, still, then resumes on another tack altogether. Down here. Wait, it says, there is some life to do, not even music entitles you to get there before your time. And your time is now. And your work is not to get there anyhow, but to make here into there. And not just for you, my sweet aesthete.

4 June 2007
Springfield

IMAGINE IMAGINE.

Two of them
across the concourse
one waving one squinting
to be sure I'm me.

The approach. The flight.
The vividness of the actual
is unforgivable.

Seasons pass,
waking is chastity
preserv'd.

*

After surviving the onslaught
of Moorish vessels and their mere piracy
I became a republic, sort of,
a gatherer of other people's blue hydrangeas
sparkling with nobody's dew.

*

Someday I'll tell you the truth,
then you'll know you know it
and neither of us will be liable
to the comforts of pretending.
Then the sea starts up again,
first a dry cough to get your attention,
that's a rock. Or is it mine?

*

Storm over, the curtain rises.
Who was I before I came home?
Shut up, the nurse sang out, and just get born,

5 June 2007
Boston

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Dreams of water.
Tell the dream that each wave dreams,
each one differently the same.
Like me, night-smitten still
in the sea glare, too tired to dream straight.

5 June 2007
on Buzzards Bay